

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee - **H.B. No. 7027**

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Good afternoon Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker, Senator Gerratana, Representative Dillon, Senator Somers, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Jane Hylan and I am the Director of School Based Health Services for the Community Health Center, Inc. (CHCI). I am writing in support of **H.B. No. 7027, An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2019.**

I care about children and I know each of you care about children. Every child deserves a chance to be healthy and to reach their full potential in life. But many children have health problems that make it difficult for them to learn and succeed. We want young people in CT to be healthy and thriving. School based health centers help young people with their mental health problems, their physical health problems, and/or their oral health problems.

Children spend most of their time in school – some suffering from chronic and acute illnesses, living with depression and anxiety or in pain due to oral abscesses. These children struggle each day to meet the most basic academic requirements never mind perform to their full potential. How can a child be expected to focus on “Reading and Writing and Arithmetic” if in pain? A SBHC partners with the school to meet the needs of each child in need and provide the care and support needed to feel successful.

CHCI is providing different models of care in over 170 school locations throughout CT. Close to 17,000 children were seen at these school sites during the last school year for care. Bringing experienced skilled providers to schools – where children spend most of their time – provides

immediate and continuous access for children with a variety of healthcare needs while allowing their parents to remain at work knowing their child is being cared for. No doubt, without SBHCs, many of these children would end up in the Emergency Room, continue without care or worse!

Several CHCI school based providers will be testifying or submitting written testimony today. Each tells a different patient story that will demonstrate the amazing positive impact SBHCs have on CT communities and the health of the next generation.

Many of CHCI School based locations receive funding from the Department of Public Health. Please maintain funding to School Based Health Centers in our state so that young people can continue to thrive and stay in school. This is critical to their future. Thank you for supporting School Based Health Centers.